

Two New Centurions of the "Legio III Scythica"

Author(s): Julian Bennett

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## Two New Centurions of the *Legio III Scythica* <sup>(1)</sup>

Research into the history and structure of the individual Roman legions during the principate continues apace, a notable milestone being the publication of the proceedings of the 1998 Lyons colloquium on this subject <sup>(2)</sup>. Vital to studies of this kind are the prosopographia of the men serving in these units, such as those that have lately appeared for the *legio III Scythica*, for its commanders and senior officers, and for its centurions and rankers <sup>(3)</sup>. Syntheses of this kind set the structure for future advances, as with this paper, reporting the epigraphic record for two new centurions of the *III Scythica*: Q. Attius Celer, named on a previously unreported plaque acquired in Smyrna in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; and M. Julius Rufus, registered on a recent find from Ankara. However, in addition to providing us with two more names for the *III Scythica*, both inscriptions add other information pertinent to our overall sum of knowledge concerning legionary centurions: the first with regard to their ownership of slaves; and the second on the *collegia ueteranorum*, the early entrance into the centurionate by men of provincial origin, and finally the rare military honour of the *albata decursio*.

*Quintus Attius Celer* (Fig. 1). — The inscription recording Q. Attius Celer is carved in letters averaging 2.3-2.4 cm high on the face of a slab of dark grey marble, with a cantilevered upper margin, and thus measuring 30 × 32 × 4-4.5 cm. It is currently on display in the Greek and Roman Antiquities section of the

(1) Dr. R. Halbertsma, of the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden, kindly gave permission to publish the first of the inscriptions reported here, while Dr. D. French, who originally reported the second (D. H. FRENCH, *Inscriptions of Ankara*, Ankara, 2003, p. 150-51), encouraged my fuller autopsy (J. BENNETT, forthcoming). Dinç Saraç, Thomas Zimmermann, Jean Greenhalgh Shields and Jacques Morin, all helped in so many ways, and Ben Claasz Cockson prepared the drawings. Finally, I am greatly indebted to Prof. A. R. Birley for his valued comments on the text and supplying many additional references, although he is not to blame for the views here.

(2) Y. LE BOHEC and C. WOLFF (edd.), *Les Légions de Rome sous le Haut-Empire*, Paris, 2000.

(3) H. DEVIJER, *Commanders and Officers of the Legio III Scythica* in D. KENNEDY (ed.), *The Twin Towns of Zeugma on the Euphrates: Rescue Work and Historical Studies*, Ann Arbor, 1998, p. 205-232; M. A. SPEIDEL, *Legio III Scythica, its Movements and Men*, in D. KENNEDY, *op. cit.*, p. 163-204.

Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden (Inventory no. LKA 1153), having been acquired in 1889 with nine other funerary records (all in the Greek language) from A. O. van Lennep, the then Dutch consul at Smyrna (İzmir) <sup>(4)</sup>. According to the museum records, Lennep obtained all ten items in Smyrna, and while no other information regarding their provenance survives, they are likely to have come from there or the immediate vicinity. It is true that certain antiquities found further inland in this general period made their way to the west of Anatolia for purchase by western collectors, such as, for example, the bronze head of Aphrodite from Satala in classical Armenia Minor, acquired by the British Museum in 1873 <sup>(5)</sup>. Yet it seems quite unlikely that an otherwise ordinary inscription such as the one we are concerned with here would have travelled very far from source to point of sale.

The text of the inscription reads : *Senilis Q(uinti) Atti / Celeris (centurionis) leg(ionis) IIII / Scyticae (!) seruos / uixit ann(os) XX*

Quintus Attius Celer, a centurion in the *legio III Scythica* and the dedicator of this funerary memorial to his 20-year old slave Senilis, was almost certainly from Cisalpine Gaul or Gallia Narbonensis, for his *nomen* is well recorded in these areas from an early date <sup>(6)</sup>. Indeed, his *cognomen*, meaning ‘quick’ or ‘nimble’, validates such an origin, for while it is found over a relatively wide area in the Romanised parts of Europe, it is especially common in Northern Italy, if

(4) Van Lennep acquired several other artefacts now in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, and was also the consignee of those items lost at sea off England with the *Castor* on 18 July 1894, and salvaged from the wreck in 1994 : these were returned to Turkey in 1999 after their identification by the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden : cf. M. A. ÖZET (ed.), *Yitik Mirasın Dönüş Öylüsü*, Ankara, 2003, p.140-143. It needs to be noted that despite continuing gripes among some circles in Turkey over the 19<sup>th</sup> century ‘rape’ of its heritage, the simple fact is that the Ottoman authorities at the time showed little concern over the matter : cf., for example, T. B. MITFORD, *Bilotti's Excavations at Satala in Anatolian Studies* 24, 1974, p. 221-244 : 236. Thus whatever the contemporary views on the 19<sup>th</sup> century antiquities trade, modern criteria provide no basis at all for the criticism or exco-riation of collectors like Lennep.

(5) H. B. WALTERS, *British Museum : Select Bronzes, Greek, Roman, and Etruscan, in the Departments of Antiquities*, London, 1915, Plate XIII, with unpaginated commentary ; see also T. B. MITFORD [n. 4], p. 236.

(6) W. SCHULZE, *Zur Geschichte lateinischer Eigennamen*, Berlin, 1904, p. 68. cf. B. LÖRINCZ and F. REDÖ (edd), *Onomasticon Provinciarum Europae Latinarum* I, Vienna (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 2005, p. 90-91, with 299 Atti, 168 from Narbonensis and North Italy. For Attius as a Romanised version of a ‘Celtic’ name : cf. J. WEISGERBER, *Die Namen der Ubier*, Cologne, 1968, p. 248-249 ; also M. DONDIN-PAYRE and M.-Th. RAEPSAET-CHARLIER, *Noms, identités culturelles et romanisation sous le Haut-Empire*, Brussels, 2001, p. 359, 361, 409, 418 and 440.

also in Iberia (7). Given that this region was a major recruiting area in the early Imperial period, it is no surprise to discover several other legionaries with the same *nomen*, for example Q. Attius Rufus of the *I Adiutrix* (CIL 13,6828) ; L. Attius Nepos and C. Attius Maximus of the *III Macedonica* (CIL 13,6853 and 11848) and Attius Atrectus of the *XXII Primigenia* (CIL 13,6994). However, the available literature reveals only one other record of a legionary with the same *nomen* and *cognomen* as our man, the centurion Attius Celer named on a probably Trajanic centurial building stone from Chester, and therefore most probably with the *legio XX Valeria Victrix* (RIB 471). He could just possibly be the same man as the Attius Celer we are concerned with here, for the recording of his full *tri nomina*, and the lavish superscript tails for the 'Y' in 'Scythica' and for the 'X' in 'uixit', all suggest that this inscription belongs to the period c. 50 - c. 100.

Whether or not this was the case, the date range of our inscription neatly accords in general terms with the period when the *legio III Scythica* arrived in Asia Minor, to eventually settle at Zeugma in Syria (8). At that time most of its centurions were of an Italian or Romanised European origin (9), and so these men might have quite easily included one of Romanised Celtic origin. However, quite what Q. Attius Celer and his slave Senilis might have been doing at Smyrna or in its vicinity at the time of Senilis' death are not so easily explained. It could be that Celer had retired from active service, and choose to settle in Smyrna. After all, there is a substantial body of epigraphic evidence indirectly demonstrating that legionary centurions never really completely retired, in the sense that they retained and used their title after leaving military service. Thus the almost complete lack of any epitaphs that describe a legionary centurion as a veteran, even though there are many examples of men from all of the other and lesser legionary ranks who record this status (10). Even so, given that Celer's origins are most probably in the Romanised parts of Europe, it might seem unlikely that he should choose to settle in a Greek-speaking Anatolian *polis* on his retirement, although not impossible, as there was a Roman citizen community at the place (11).

(7) I. KAJANTO, *The Latin Cognomina*, Helsinki, 1965, p. 248 ; cf. B. LÖRINCZ and O. HARL (edd.), *Onomasticon Provinciarum Europae Latinarum* II, Vienna, 1999, p. 47, with 158 Celer, 44 from North Italy and 36 from Iberia, but only 11 from Narbonensis.

(8) The legion transferred east from Moesia in 56/57 to assist in Corbulo's Armenian war, arriving at Zeugma in c. 66 : M. A. SPEIDEL, *Legio IV Scythica* in Y. LE BOHEC and C. WOLFF [n. 2], p. 327-337 : 329-331 ; and Id., *Legio III Scythica* [n. 3], p. 165-167.

(9) M. A. SPEIDEL [n. 3], p. 165-66, with 171 and 198.

(10) Cf. O. RICHIER, *Centuriones ad Rhenum. Les centurions légionnaires des armées romaines du Rhin*, Paris, 2004, p. 112. Retired auxiliary centurions, on the other hand, did at least sometimes record their veteran status : e.g. IDR 3/2.366 = CIL 3,1471, and 369 = CIL 3,1472.

(11) E.g., Q. Cassius Saturninus, *Romilia tribus, domo Smyrna*, a centurion in the *legio III Scythica* and then the *V Macedonica* : SEG 32,1276 = M. A. SPEIDEL [n. 3], p. 188-189, no. 44.

Alternatively, of course, it could be that retirement does not come into the issue at all: legionary centurions travelled away from their garrison in the course of their duty, and so there is no reason at all why Celer should not have been in Smyrna in transit to or from one or another place.

Celer's ownership of a slave does not, unfortunately, help in establishing his service status at the time: after all, slaves were simply a piece of property, mere *instrumenti genus uocale*, 'talking tools' <sup>(12)</sup>, and therefore they could be included among a soldier's *castrense peculium*. This is made quite clear by several Egyptian papyri, as in, for example, the will of Antonius Silvanus, of the *ala I Thracum Mauretana*, by which he manumitted his slave Cronio <sup>(13)</sup>. There is no example in the epigraphic record that testifies quite as explicitly on this matter as the papyrus records, although there are a number of inscriptions that indicate slave ownership by serving soldiers was not unusual. Such is clear from the epitaph for P. Turranius Severus, a centurion with the *legio XV Apollinaris*, which was set up at the legion's base at Satala by his freedman, Turranius Epaphroditus <sup>(14)</sup>. As Severus was only 41 at the time of his death, then the unavoidable conclusion is that he was still on active service when he died, and the probability is that Epaphroditus was enfranchised in his will. It is, of course, quite possible that Severus had manumitted Epaphroditus before he died, a practice certified elsewhere for slaves owned by military men in other parts of the Roman Empire <sup>(15)</sup>. But even if Epaphroditus had been manumitted while Turranius Severus was still alive, his master must still have been in military service at the time <sup>(16)</sup>.

Such matters apart, it would be easy in this ancillary discourse regarding slave ownership by centurions – serving or otherwise – to forget poor Senilis, whose death caused the memorial to be set up by Celer in the first place. An injustice of this magnitude is hardly deserving of his memory, and the indirect contribution his death has made to our overall knowledge, even though all that can really be said about him is that, as was usual for a slave, Senilis had a single name followed by that of his master in the genitive, for Senilis 'belonged' to him. Consequently, just as would be the case with a wife or a child, the inscription

(12) VARRO, *Rer. Rust.* 1,17,1. Personal slaves, like Senilis, are presumably something quite different from the military servants (*calones/uexillarii/barones*) recorded in the literature and in the epigraphic record, even though some of these might be slaves: cf. M. P. SPEIDEL, *The Soldier's Servants in Ancient Society* 20, 1989, p. 239-248.

(13) S. RICCOBONO [ed.], *Fontes iuris Romani antejustiniani* III, Florence, 1943 (2nd ed.), p. 47.

(14) D. H. FRENCH and J. R. SUMMERLY, *Four Latin Inscriptions from Satala* in *Anatolian Studies* 37, 1987, p. 17-22: 18-21, no. 3.

(15) Cf. *CIL* 3,8143 and *CIL* 3,1652.

(16) For other examples of slave-owning centurions, although their service status is not always clear, see *CIL* 13,11836; *SEG* 32,1276, and *SEG* 33,1188.

reads 'Senilis, of Q. Attius Celer', with the word '*servus*' inserted to clarify his servile status.

With regard to the name itself, at first sight this would seem to be taken directly from the Latin, to mean 'old' or 'aged', or even 'old man'. As such, this apparent Latin origin might seem to many to be the more remarkable fact about Senilis, for it is commonly assumed that all slaves in the Roman period had Greek names. In fact, five of the ten most frequently attested slave-names at Rome are Latin in origin, while on an overall basis, they comprise 8,579 or about 32% of the total of 28,000 slave names recorded in the city <sup>(17)</sup>. As it is, however, the name Senilis is not found among the Latin slave names at Rome, of which a great number were assigned on the basis of age, or for mental abilities or disabilities. It could be, therefore, that in this case, it was a name used in jest, for our Senilis was a mere 20 years old at the time of his death, or it might possibly have referred to the advanced age of his own father when he himself was born. Alternatively, and perhaps more probably, the name is a Latinisation of a Celtic name beginning with Sen-, either personal, tribal or toponymic <sup>(18)</sup>.

*Marcus Julius Rufus* (Fig. 2) <sup>(19)</sup>. — The inscription recording M. Julius Rufus, the second new centurion of the *III Scythica*, is in the form of a funerary *bomos*, a rectangular block of brown-grey limestone measuring 170 × 70 × 66 cm, with letters on average 5cm high. This item is currently displayed at the Roman Baths Museum in Ankara (Inventory no. 113.534.99), having been seized from a group of Ankara-based antiquities thieves in 1999, but its original location is unknown. However, an origin in Ancyra or the immediate vicinity is confirmed by this *bomos* having been erected by a college of army veterans 'constituted at Ancyra', while in material, size and form it is of a type well known in the local epigraphic record.

The text of the inscription reads: *M(arco) Iulio M(arci) f(ilio) Fab(ia tribu) / Rufo (centurioni) leg(ionis) IIII / Scy(thicae) secundo / princ(ipie) priori // donis donato / ab diuo Vespasian[o] / et albata decursi[o]ne [[ab imp(eratore) Domitiano]] / (vacat) // Collegium uet(er)anorum qui An(cy)rae consis(tunt) / h(onoris) (vacat) c(ausa).*

(17) H. SOLIN, *Die stadtrömischen Sklavennamen. Ein Namenbuch I*, Stuttgart, 1996, p. 680: note, however, that the name 'Senilis' does not appear among the slave names recorded there.

(18) Cf. A. HOLDER, *Alt-celtischer Sprachsatz II*, Leipzig, 1904, cols.1463-1504; cf. also J. WEISBERGER [n. 6], p. 116, 179 and 185, and M. DONDIN-PAYRE and M.-Th. RAEPSAET-CHARLIER [n. 6], p. 387, 641, and 645, for its use as a personal name. B. LŐRINCZ and O. HARL (edd.), *Onomasticon Provinciarum Europae Latinarum IV*, Vienna, 2002, p. 66, show a prevalence in Belgica and the Germanies. Some 'Latin' *nomina* have the same root: cf. W. SCHULZE [n. 6], p. 228, on Senilius, for example.

(19) J. BENNETT [n. 1] provides a full account of this man and his career, which is therefore only summarised here.

The subject of the inscription, Marcus Julius Rufus, achieved the rank of centurion '*secundus princeps prior*' in the *legio III Scythica*, during a career that saw him receiving honours from both Vespasian and Domitian. Moreover, as Domitian's name was originally included in the text, only to be erased after he suffered *damnatio memoriae*, Rufus evidently died before Domitian's assassination on 18 September 96. Rufus' name, rank and service honours having been listed, the text concludes with the information that the monument was erected in Rufus' honour by the college of veterans formed at Ancyra.

Rufus' imperial *nomen gentilicium*, conjoined with one of the most common of the early *cognomina* <sup>(20)</sup>, indicates he was the descendant of a *peregrinus* who won citizenship under one of the first two Caesars. This supposition is strengthened by his affiliation with their Fabia voting tribe, which would also normally suggest a man born in Italy <sup>(21)</sup>. Here, however, the union of imperial *nomen* and the *Fabia tribus* points to an origin outside the peninsula, either colonial, as at Colonia Julia Augusta Felix Berytus, or provincial, as at Ancyra <sup>(22)</sup>. As our Rufus was buried at Ancyra we might reasonably assume he came from the same place, for not only did legionary veterans often return to their *origo* on release from military service, but Rufus' burial and the making of a *bomos* in his honour were overseen by the *collegium ueteranorum* 'constituted at Ancyra'. Very little is known about the *collegia ueteranorum*, for there are only four other epigraphic records that specifically refer to *collegia* of this type <sup>(23)</sup>, but they were probably an analogous institution to the *collegia funeraticia* of serving legionary *ordinarii*, developing wherever there was a suitably large group of settled veterans <sup>(24)</sup>. More significantly, although the appearance of the *collegia ueteranorum* has been assigned to the mid-second century, our man at Ankara proves that they already existed under Domitian <sup>(25)</sup>.

Accepting our Rufus as a veteran, then, whatever his actual length of service, he must have entered the legions some time between 54 and 71 at the latest, to

(20) I. KAJANTO [n. 7], p. 30.

(21) W. KUBITSCHKE, *Imperium romanum tributum descriptum*, Vienna, 1889, p. 270.

(22) E.g., for Berytus, Cn. Julius Rufus : *IGLS* 6, 2955, and for Ancyra, C. Iulius Severus : *ILS* 8829.

(23) Aquileia : *CIL* 5,784 ; Ateste : *CIL* 5,2475, of 161-167 or later ; and Carnuntum : *CIL* 3,11189 (probably after 210, as it includes the formula *deuotus numini maiestatique*), and *CIL* 3,11097 = *ILS* 7245 = *AE* 1983,768.

(24) W. LIEBENAM, *Zur Geschichte und Organisation des römischen Vereinswesens*, Berlin, 1890, p. 297-308 ; and M. GINSBURG, *Roman Military Clubs and their Social Functions* in *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 71, 1940, p. 149-56 : 151 ; also VEGETIUS 2,20.

(25) L. J. F. KEEPIE, *Vexilla Veteranorum* in *Papers of the British School at Rome* 41, 1973, p. 8-17 : 12 (= *Id.*, *Legions and Veterans : Roman Army Papers 1971-2000*, Stuttgart, 2000, p. 239-248 : 243) ; and *Id.*, *Colonisation and Veteran Settlement in Italy 47-14 BC*, London, 1983, p. 110.

allow the absolute minimum of 25 years service to have been completed between Vespasian's death in 79 and Domitian's murder in 96. In which case, if Rufus was indeed an Ancyran by origin, as seems probable, then he was one of those rare provincials who achieved centurial rank in the first century. With specific regard to the *III Scythica* for example, it has already been noted that until the early 2nd century, its centurions were exclusively from Italy or the more Romanised parts of Europe <sup>(26)</sup>. However, this deduction is based entirely on the epigraphic record for that legion, which need not reflect the reality of the matter, for there is literary and other epigraphic evidence to show that Corbulo's army received a number of 'eastern' recruits <sup>(27)</sup> : and a good many of them quite likely already held citizenship status, Galatia, for example, having been a Roman province for more than seven decades. Thus, our Rufus could have been among the many '*orientales*' recruited by Corbulo. If so, he need not have been alone. C. Coesius Florus, *primus pilus* in the *III Scythica* at roughly the same time as Rufus was in that legion, may have come from Cappadocia, a province since AD 17, as both he and other members of his immediate and extended family were buried in the provincial capital of Caesarea <sup>(28)</sup>.

Rufus' epitaph does not specify what military awards he received from Vespasian, or what rank he held at the time, or why he received these awards. However, in the Flavian period, the minimum bravery award for a *miles* or a centurion was a combination of *torques*, *armillae* and *phalerae* <sup>(29)</sup>, and Rufus' awards are likely to have been at least the same, probably for his service during Vespasian's Judean War <sup>(30)</sup>. The honour that Rufus received from Domitian, however, the *albata decursio*, or the right to 'parade in white', is something very different, for it is one of the rarest and most obscure imperial awards a soldier could receive. Indeed, until very recently, there were exactly two recorded cases of this award, both from Baalbek <sup>(31)</sup>, but then a third surfaced in Beirut in

(26) M. A. SPEIDEL [n. 3], p. 165-66, with 171 and 198.

(27) See, for example, TACITUS, *Annales* 13,7, for recruits in 54 from *proxima Syria*, and 13,35, for recruits in 58 specifically from Galatia and Cappadocia ; also JOSEPHUS, *Jewish War* 4,5,15 [37-38], for a group of other recruits from Syria at about this time. To which add *CIL* 3,14358/20, which records a Galatian recruit to the *legio XV Apollinaris* presumably when it was in the east in the period 62-71 : he was probably just one of many, as in an average year, a legion required some 100 new recruits : J. C. MANN, *Legionary Recruitment and Veteran Settlement during the Principate*, London, 1983, p. 59.

(28) *AE* 1984,893, with 894 and 895 ; but see M. A. SPEIDEL [n. 3], p. 187, where an Italian origin is preferred.

(29) V. A. MAXFIELD, *The Military Decorations of the Roman Army*, London, 1981, p. 184.

(30) See J. BENNETT [n. 1] for the arguments, not directly relevant here.

(31) L. Antonius Naso : *CIL* 3,14387[i] = *ILS* 9199 = *IGLS* 6,2781 = B. DOBSON, *Die Primipilares : Entwicklung und Bedeutung, Laufbahnen und Persönlichkeiten eines römischen Offiziersranges*, Cologne, 1978, p. 203-204, no. 75 ; and 'M. Antonius Hoplo' : *CIL* 3,14387 [ii] = *ILS* 9198 = *IGLS* 6,2798 = B. DOBSON, *op. cit.*, p. 218, no. 95.



1996<sup>(32)</sup>, and so with the Rufus inscription from Ankara, there are now exactly four references to the *albata decursio* in the entire Roman epigraphic record. To be more precise, these four texts represent a scant 1.4% of the 277 or so inscriptions that mention military *dona* as known of in c. 1980<sup>(33)</sup>. Even without taking into consideration any later discoveries, it is clear that the award of the *albata decursio* was an extremely rare distinction.

Yet, quite what is meant by the ‘honour, from the emperor, of the *albata decursio*’ remains uncertain, even if the Roman army was associated with the wearing of white clothing on certain formal and festive occasions. For example, after Vitellius’ victory at Bedriacum (Cremona) in the late Spring of 69, his *consilium* advised him not to enter Rome as if a conquering general, and so he came into the city with his *praefecti castrorum*, their tribunes, and his senior centurions (*primi centurionum*), all dressed *candida uestis*, in ‘white costume’<sup>(34)</sup>. Similarly, the *pompa* held by Gallienus in 262 for his *decennalia* featured a parade of *albato milites*, ‘soldiers dressed in white’, marching immediately behind the senators and the equestrian *ordo*<sup>(35)</sup>. Likewise, when Honorius married Maria in 398, *candidus interea positus exercitus armis* – ‘soldiers in white, who had laid down their weapons’ – took part in the ceremony<sup>(36)</sup>.

It is clear, therefore, that the wearing of white by the Roman military was associated with specific formal and festive occasions. Which naturally brings us to the question of what colour clothing Roman soldiers wore when on duty. Quite simply, there is no conclusive evidence on the subject, although it has been argued from the surviving iconography and for reasons of economy – as undyed wool would be cheaper – that a white or whitish colour was more probable<sup>(37)</sup>. Yet if we exclude the literary references noted above that mention ‘soldiers dressed in white’, then the few surviving texts clearly associate soldiers with red clothing<sup>(38)</sup>. A more serious objection is simply that if Roman soldiers regularly wore white clothing, then it would be pointless for our sources to draw attention to ‘soldiers dressed in white’ on those occasions when they did so. Likewise, a standard Roman military ‘white’ tunic seems most unlikely if the privilege of the *albata decursio* was to have any real value to its recipients, to the extent of it being recorded on honorary and funerary monuments. It is true that doubt has

(32) Cn. Julius Rufus : *AE* 1998,1435, and C. GHADBAN, *Trois nouvelles inscriptions latines de Beyrouth* in *Bulletin d’archéologie et d’architecture libanaises* 2, 1967, p. 206-35 : 214-223.

(33) V. A. MAXFIELD [n. 29], p.264-70.

(34) TACITUS, *Histories* 2,89.

(35) *Historia Augusta*, Gallieni duo 8,1.

(36) CLAUDIAN, *Epithalamium* 295.

(37) N. FUENTES, *The Roman Military Tunic* in M. DAWSON (ed.), *Roman Military Equipment : The Accoutrements of War*, Oxford, 1987, p. 41-76 : 51-60.

(38) MARTIAL 14,129, and *Historia Augusta*, Claudius 14,5.

recently been expressed on the concept of a standard 'Roman military uniform' <sup>(39)</sup>, but the evidence shows that both central and local clothing requisitions were made on such a scale that these at least must have been done according to some form of 'uniform' specification. One might note, for example, the clothing order valued at either HS 1.2 or 1.4 million (the text is unclear) made in 209 BC for the army in Spain and the 6,000 togas and 30,000 tunics ordered in 169 BC for the army in Macedonia <sup>(40)</sup>. In both cases it seems reasonable to assume that material, colour and size were specified, just as was the case with the clothing order dispatched to Egypt in AD 138 by Avidius Heliodorus, the then governor of Cappadocia <sup>(41)</sup>.

Although the last of these requisitions did, in fact, include one white tunic, apparently for the governor himself, and four white cloaks (for his personal guard ?), the conclusion must be that the 'normal' colour for Roman military clothing was anything but white, and thus the exclusive nature of the *albata decursio*. More to the point, as the terminology reveals, the *honorato albata decursio ab imperatore* was a specific privilege granted by the reigning emperor himself, and – in the early Roman Empire at least – granted to an exceptionally small number of serving centurions. True, the right was extended to other soldiers on certain festive occasions, such as the *decennalia* of Gallienus, and the marriage of Honorius, although despite what has recently been claimed, Severus did most certainly not extend it to all centurions, nor Gallienus to all legionaries <sup>(42)</sup>. Even so, in the early empire at least, the honour of being able to parade in a formal white uniform (and quite possibly without bearing the arms that identified a soldier) was something out of the ordinary. This was probably because in public terms, it had the effect of placing those centurions thus honoured on the same social status level – even if only on a transitory basis – as those officials and members of the equestrian order who were entitled by law to wear such bright white clothing <sup>(43)</sup>. Little surprise, then, that the honour of the *albata decursio* is emphasised on the monuments of those men who received it.

(39) J. C. N. COULSTON, *Military Identity and Personal Self-identity in the Roman Army* in L. DE LIGT, E. A. HEMELRIJK, and H. W. SINGOR (edd.), *Roman Rule and Civic Life: Local and Regional Perspectives*, Amsterdam, 2004, p. 133-52 : 143-148.

(40) Spain : Livy 27,10,11-13 ; Macedonia: Id. 44,16.4.

(41) BGU 239 = SP 395.

(42) Y. LE BOHEC, *The Imperial Roman Army*, London, 1994, p. 193 and 198 referring to HERODIAN 3,8,5 for Severus, but which does not mention the award ; and to *Historia Augusta*, *Gallieni duo* 8,1 for Gallienus, where the *albato milite* has been misunderstood. Unfortunately these claims now have almost canonical status : see, e.g., D. H. FRENCH [n. 1], p. 151 ; and C. C. PETOLESCU, *Cronica Epigrafică a României (XIX-XX, 1999-2000)* in *Studii și cercetări de istorie veche și arheologie* 52-53, 2001-2002, p. 267-300 : 285, n. 6.

(43) A. VON DOMASZEWSKI, *Untersuchungen zur Römischen Kaisergeschichte : II. Die Pompea an den Decennalien des Gallienus* in *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 57,

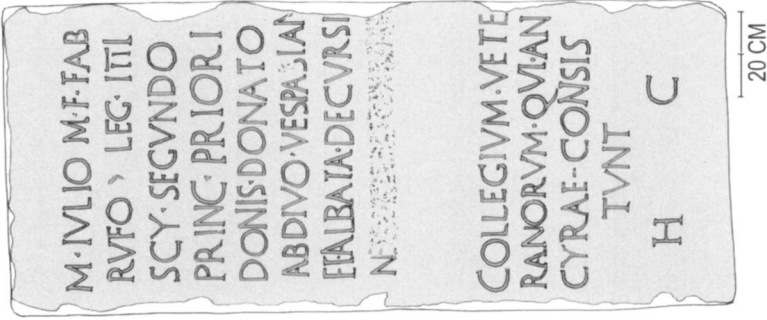


Fig. 2.

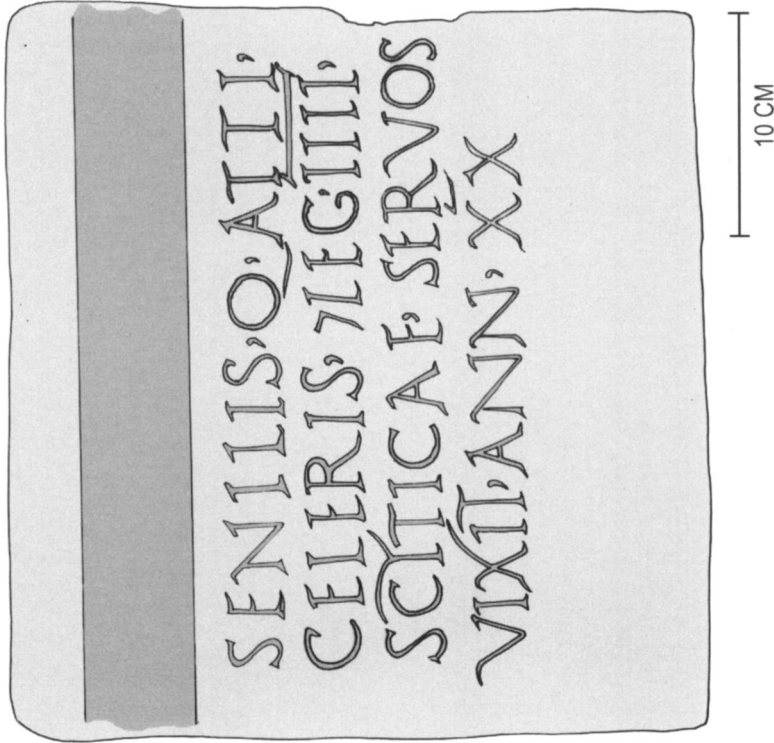


Fig. 1.

None of this of course brings us any nearer to making any precise statement concerning the basis on which a centurion received the honour of the *albata decursio*. However, as will be argued elsewhere <sup>(44)</sup>, although the *albata decursio* might not have been a *donum militare* in the strict sense, received for bravery on the field, its possible status as a wartime award cannot be entirely excluded. Indeed, given the apparent anomaly that exists whereby all centurions below the *primi ordines* were eligible for exactly the same scale of military awards, regardless of their seniority <sup>(45)</sup>, then it is just possible that the *albata decursio* filled a clear gap in the existing rank-related structure of such decorations.

*Department of Archaeology and History of Art,  
Bilkent University, Ankara.*

Julian BENNETT.

1902, p. 510-516, and ID., *Beiträge zur Kaisergeschichte : III. Die Inschrift des Antonius Naso* in *Philologus* 66/2, 1907, p. 161-164 : 162 ; also E. DE RUGGIERO, *Dizionario epigrafico di antichità romane*, 2.2, Rome, 1900, p. 1552-1553, sv *decursio*.

(44) J. BENNETT [n. 1].

(45) V. A. MAXFIELD [n. 29], p. 185-86 and 200.